The Concept of Thematic Village as A Driver of Sustainable Settlement in Semarang City

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Abstract. Population growth and urbanization are global issues that the world must face. Increased pressure on the socio-economic welfare of the community, the environment, and living standards can lead to poverty. Several countries in the world, including Indonesia, are trying to overcome these challenges in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Semarang City is one of the cities that is committed to tackling poverty in 2016-2021 through the "Great Gate" program. One of the tangible manifestations of responding to poverty alleviation in Semarang City is the Thematic Village program, which requires a minimum of two urban villages for each sub-district in Semarang City. This paper aims to identify or assess the potential for sustainable thematic villages. A qualitative approach is used in this study. Through a case study in Batik Rejomulyo Village, several strategies were formulated using a SWOT analysis. The results show that there are several potentials that Rejomulyo Batik Village has, including a reasonably strategic location, the presence of skilled batik-making resources, a friendly community, and the opportunity for tourism integration with the Old City. Batik Village's existence can improve the community's quality of life, provide opportunities for the district to manage its environment, improve social relations and strengthen social ties through an institution. This shows that thematic villages could encourage the realization of sustainable settlements.

1 Introduction

The high flow of urbanization increases the growth and development of the population in cities in Indonesia. This makes urban areas have a variety of problems that are quite complex. The high rate of population growth, the issue of providing settlements and their supporting facilities, and poverty are some problems that arise in urban areas. Increasing land prices in urban areas have resulted in the emergence of urban settlement areas with a high density and the potential to cause slum settlements.

Poverty is a problem often encountered in Indonesia, not least in the city of Semarang. Based on the Semarang City Poverty Profile document in 2018, the number of poor people in Semarang City 2018 amounted to 73.6 thousand, or 4.14% of the total population of Semarang City. One of the innovations carried out by the Semarang City Government to overcome the problem of poverty and realize the arrangement of residential areas and their
supporting infrastructure is through the "Gerbang Hebat." The program or a joint movement to reduce poverty and unemployment through harmonizing the economy, education, ecosystem, and ethos with the community. One is the implementation of thematic village programs.

Thematic villages have developed in Indonesia with all their forms and uniqueness. Thematic village development can have a positive impact if the community can see the positive side, participate in it, and can see the potential for additional income that can be generated [1]. A thematic village can be likened to a development-oriented toward unique and distinctive topics and ideas [2,3]. The thematic village is also the creation of a characteristically sustainable village space that is community-based [4,5]. Thematic village management requires the participation of the community to develop optimally [6,7]. A strong commitment from the district is needed to support creative village activities and promotions [8]. In other words, each thematic village has its characteristics and uniqueness by not letting the community intervene.

The development of thematic villages was carried out in stages, starting from 2016 [9]. The thematic village program in Semarang City is implemented to overcome poverty, especially by meeting basic needs and encouraging the local economy by utilizing the potential that exists in each region. The Semarang City Government hopes that thematic villages can be realized in all urban villages in Semarang City. Until 2022, there have been 177 thematic villages in Semarang City, where all of these villages are the initiations of the Semarang City government supported by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) companies and non-governmental organizations [10]. The thematic village, which is the location of this research, is in Rejomulyo Batik Village. The local potential owned by Rejomulyo Batik Village is a typical Semarangan batik craft.

Through the development of the potential of thematic villages, it is hoped that the sustainability of the residential environment can be realized. The sustainability of the residential environment is where there is attention to urban development, especially in urban areas, which is a crucial typology to be applied to achieve sustainability [11]. Sustainable settlements offer an opportunity for environmental management, economic development, quality of life improvement, and social equity [12]. The role of the community in village development needs to be continuously motivated and maintained [13]. Community participation is also required in adjusting, integrating, uniting, maintaining, improving, and protecting settlements and access to public facilities and infrastructure services. Traditions and habits, social interactions, the quality of the residential environment, the role of government, and the economy are factors that influence a village's existence [14]. Therefore, sustainable settlements can be seen based on four aspects: environmental, economic, social, and institutional [11].

This article aims to identify or assess the potential for sustainable thematic villages. Issues of tourism development, community perceptions, and environmental conditions of thematic villages are considered in determining the existing potential. By identifying existing prospects, a strategy for realizing the sustainability of thematic villages at Rejomulyo Batik Village could be applied.

2 Research Method

The research approach used in this research is qualitative. The data studied were in the form of library data/secondary data and primary data. The analytical method used is a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) analysis. Evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses is carried out in the SWOT analysis technique [15]. The results of the SWOT analysis can be used to determine direction and recommendations through internal factors (Strength and Weakness) and external factors (Opportunity and Threat). The research results
will be explained descriptively. This study describes the potential of thematic villages in Semarang City in encouraging the realization of sustainable housing. In addition to secondary data, this research is also supported by primary data from interviews. The resource person in this study was the Head of Neighborhood Association (called RW) 02 Batik Village, Semarang City.

Fig. 1. Delineation of Rejomulyo Batik Village, Semarang City

The research location is in Rejomulyo Batik Village, as seen in Figure 1. This village is one of the thematic villages in the East Semarang District, which used to be a slum area inhabited by low-income people. Administratively, Rejomulyo Batik Village is located in RW 02, Rejomulyo Village, East Semarang District, Semarang City. This location is identified as a trade and service area. To the north, Rejomulyo Batik Village is bordered by Prosecutors Village, to the east by Widohajho Street, to the south by Pattimura Street, and the west by MT Haryono Street (Bubakan Roundabout).

Fig. 2. Mural Art at Batik Village

Rejomulyo Batik Village is well known as a location with many batik artisans who have existed since before the colonial period. Batik Village has survived to this day because of its historical background, the good spatial layout of the settlements, and the community's efforts to generate batik business [16]. In 2016 the Semarang City government began to develop this village through the thematic village program, where this program is the flagship program of the Semarang City government. One of the icons in Batik Village is "Kampoeng Djadhoel", which offers ancient tours such as several batik crafts and antiques on display. This village
is also decorated with mural art as seen in Figure 2. Unique experiences and impressions are given to tourists from Batik Village. They visit because they are not only able to buy, but tourists are also invited to be directly involved in the batik-making process [17].

3 Result and Discussion

The sustainability of Rejomulyo Batik Village will be discussed in four aspects: social, economic, environmental, and institutional. The potential and existing problems can be identified from these four aspects, and then a sustainability strategy is formulated for Rejomulyo Batik Village.

3.1 Social Sustainability

The social aspect is one of the indicators used in assessing sustainable settlements. Humans as social beings have an essential role in the context of sustainability. The people of Batik Village show their concern for the environment by being responsible for the cleanliness of their respective homes. Well-established social relations in Batik Village not only support sustainable development but are also a significant factor in maintaining cultural diversity and recognizing and respecting existing social and cultural systems. As seen in Figure 3, the community draws mural art together at Batik Village. Gatherings and deliberations of residents are often held to strengthen the ties of kinship between neighbors.

Improving social sustainability and social and human capital needs more attention. The potential community roles in sustainable urban development include the position in formulating concepts and strategies, the part in determining the design or design, and the role as the manager of the urban village environment (Yuliani et al, 2021) [13]. Therefore, the people of Batik Village must increase their existing human capital by keeping the environment around their homes beautiful and comfortable. In addition, by maintaining the friendliness and cohesiveness of the community, social capital can be increased to support the realization of the sustainability of Rejomulyo Batik Village.

![Fig. 3. Social Participation at Batik Village](image)

3.2 Economic Sustainability

Most of the people of the Batik Village have a livelihood as a seller of batik cloth (home industry) as seen in Figure 4. Although the education level of the people in the Batik Village is only high school graduates, it is possible if there is a will from the community to develop to achieve sustainability. In its development, Batik Village can improve, which is indicated
by the increasing level of community welfare. This can be seen in the people who can open branches of their own business and are even able to buy a car.

Fig. 4. Batik Shop at Batik Village

In improving the economic sustainability at Batik Village, the community is required to be creative to improve their economic conditions. Starting from the products to be produced, marketing planning that utilizes technology, organizing certain events such as bazaars to promote goods and attract tourists, and providing visitor facilities and infrastructure so that Batik Village has its charm to trigger tourists to improve the welfare of its people.

The economic aspect is essential in the sustainability of Batik Village because the community's welfare has increased due to this thematic village program. And it is hoped that in the future, sales of batik products and the number of visitors to Batik Village will continue to increase its sustainability. Like the characteristics found in sustainable settlements stated by Dyah & Yuliastuti [12], Batik Village has shown an opportunity for economic development and improving the quality of life.

3.3 Environmental Sustainability

The environmental aspect is one of the essential aspects in seeing the sustainability of a settlement. An environment that is neatly organized and of good quality can increase the sustainability of a human settlement. The biggest problem Batik Village faces is that there is no wastewater management system for batik production, which, if left unchecked, will hurt the environmental conditions of Batik Village and the surrounding area. This certainly sparked public attention, which ultimately led to a solution. The community then collaborates with students from the Faculty of Engineering, Diponegoro University, to overcome waste problems that can potentially damage the surrounding environment. The district assists students in building a Waste Water Management (IPAL) installation, wherein the batik artisans, coordinated by the Batik Village Association, manage the waste from the batik process for environmental sustainability in Batik Village and the surrounding area.
Batik Village has a well-organized environment. This village is equipped with cleaning facilities, good lighting, village map and a security post as seen in Figure 5. This village can be accessed using public transportation or buses (BRT Semarang), as well as private vehicles. However, parking is not provided for private vehicle users so visitors park along the road. The infrastructure at Batik Village also looks good and neat as seen in Figure 6. This village is equipped with paving roads, closed drainage, clean water sources from PDAM and wells and affordable electricity and telecommunications services. Although green open space at Batik Village is limited, some plants are found in the yard and plants on the side of the road.

3.4 Institutional Sustainability

Implementing thematic villages requires the active involvement of various stakeholders and the community. Institutional aspects are fundamental to knowing the sustainability of a village. A particular association mainly carries out the management of Batik Village for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Neighborhood Association (called RW) 02 and the association at the Neighborhood Association Unit (called RT). The level was formed to manage, develop potential, and create its characteristics in each RT- which is expected to increase tourist attraction. The management of Batik Village in its development can improve, as indicated by the level of community welfare increasing every year, but this is not enough to achieve the desired sustainability. The role of institutions in Batik Village is still managed as a whole so that it is not too developed significantly in its development. So that in future management, it is necessary to have an institution or community specifically to maximize the effect of Batik Village to be more sustainable. Batik Village community activity could be seen in Figure 7.
3.5 Rejomulyo Batik Village Sustainability Strategy

Strategy formulation uses the SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) method. The following is a SWOT analysis table:

Table 1. SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>Strength (S)</th>
<th>Weaknesses (W)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. The capability skills of the community in making batik products such as cloth or clothes are deficient.</td>
<td>1. Each RT at Batik Village has its characteristics, but some RTs are less able to manage their territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Rejomulyo Batik Village is located in a strategic location.</td>
<td>2. In carrying out community empowerment activities, Batik Village often experiences a lack of funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. There is a plan to develop the integration of Batik Village tourism with the Old City area.</td>
<td>1. Making Batik Village as a leading tourist package in the city of Semarang, which is supported by adequate facilities and infrastructure as a tourist attraction and to form community motivation in developing the potential of each RT area to create its characteristics to increase tourist attraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. There is a plan to make a unique parking lot at the north of Batik Village.</td>
<td>1. There is government participation in developing and promoting the Batik Village area as a special tour package integrated with the Old City area so that it can be known more widely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. The characteristics of the people of Batik Village are still gemeinschaft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Sales of typical Semarang batik can't compete with the typical batik of Pekalongan and Solo.
2. The location of Batik Village has a narrow road width and does not have a parking lot, so tourists are reluctant to visit.

1. Carry out promotions by implementing events, bazaars, or exhibitions to know Semarang's batik better.
2. The government's participation must be balanced with supporting facilities and infrastructure to attract tourists.

1. The existence of a community can help management in production and marketing outside the Batik Village location. It is more widely known and able to compete with other batik products.
2. It is making special parking that can accommodate tourists who want to visit.

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**SWOT analysis, identifying internal and external factors that are owned and faced in the preparation of the development strategy of Rejomulyo Batik Village:**

- **Strategy Strength - Opportunity (SO)**
  This strategy is made to take advantage of all strengths to take advantage of the most significant opportunity, namely by making Batik Village a leading tourist package in Semarang City to increase the number of tourists visiting Batik Village. In addition, the strategy taken is to develop the potential of each RT area to form its characteristics to increase tourist attraction.

- **Strategy Strength - Threat (ST)**
  Strategies in using their strengths to overcome threats are 1) Promoting by carrying out events, bazaars, or exhibitions so that the typical Semarang batik is better known. This is because the reputation of Semarang batik is still inferior to Pekalongan batik and Solo batik. 2) Provision of supporting facilities and infrastructure to attract tourists because so far, Batik Village has limited road access (narrow road width) and does not have a parking area, making tourists less comfortable visiting.

- **Strategy Weakness - Opportunity (WO)**
  This strategy is made to take advantage of existing opportunities to minimize current weaknesses, namely by maximizing the government's role in developing and promoting the Batik Village area because so far, the people of Batik Village in carrying out empowerment activities often experience a lack of funds.

- **Strategy Weakness - Threat (WT)**
  This strategy is based on activities that are defensive and seek to minimize weaknesses and avoid threats. This strategy was created to take advantage of existing opportunities to minimize current weaknesses and threats by creating a community that helps management in production and marketing outside the Batik Village location to be more widely known.

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**4 Conclusion**

The development of sustainable settlements does not only focus on social, economic, and environmental aspects but realizing sustainable settlements must also focus on institutional aspects. Institutional aspects are vital in managing resources and the environment. This aspect has an essential role in managing and evaluating the sustainable development of Batik Village. Management must maximize the existing potential and shape the character of
resources and the environment that have contributed value to the development of the welfare of the people of Batik Village and the surrounding environment.

In the context of tourism, the community as service providers can involve humans with diverse activities ranging from travel agents, transportation services, accommodation services, food services, tourist souvenir sales services, and tourist attractions services.

The Rejomulyo Batik Village has several potentials that support the sustainability of the tourist village, such as its strategic location, the existence of skilled batik-making resources, the presence of a friendly community, and the opportunity for tourism integration with the Old City. Through this study, it can be seen that the existence of thematic villages improves the community's quality of life, provides opportunities for the district to manage their environment, improves social relations among residents, and strengthens social bonds through an institution in their village. Doing so shows that thematic villages are one form of impetus in creating sustainable settlements.

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